

## IV. Ways to Participate

### Topic: IV. Ways to Participate

**What students do:** Select quotes about civic participation they find meaningful and create a “public service announcement” on the importance of civic participation.

CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.3.1, 12.3.2, 12.10

CMS Promising Approaches: 1, 2, 3

**Thanks to:** [California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools](#)

### And I Quote... Ideas for Using Quotes

#### Overview

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to examine quotes related to the importance of civic participation, select those that resonate with them, and create “public service announcements” to generate awareness with other students or groups.

#### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe reasons why civic participation is important in a democracy.
- Select at least one quote that they think sends an important message about an engaged citizenry or civic participation.
- Tell why the quote resonates with them.
- Incorporating their selected quote, create a public service announcement to convince others about the importance of an engaged citizenry.

#### Materials/Preparation

**Handout 1: “Ten Civic Participation Quotes”**—1 for each student.

Art supplies

Decide in advance what medium you want students to make their PSAs in. Consider:

- Posters that can be displayed in the school
- Television spots that can be presented to other classes, parent groups, community groups.
- Radio spots that could be presented on the intercom.
- Web-based PSAs that could be viewed by other students, parents, community members.

Optional: **Handout 2: “Additional Civic Participation Quotes”**—These might be useful if students want more than the first 10 or if you decide to do additional activities with quotes.

#### Procedure

##### I. Selecting Quotes

- A. Discuss with students the importance of participation in a democracy (see lessons in section One: “What is a Democracy?” and the other lessons in Section Three: “Why Participate” for ideas).
- B. Tell students that they are going to have an opportunity to think more carefully about why people should care about and participate in our democracy and that they will have a chance

to convince others that it is important. Explain that many people have given this a lot of thought and have said some interesting things about civic participation.

- C. Distribute **Handout 1: “Ten Civic Participation Quotes”** to each student. Have students work in partners or triads to select quotes that are meaningful to them. They should discuss and decide which quotes resonate with each person.

## **II. Creating Public Service Announcements**

- A. After students have identified their quotes, have members from each group share one they thought was especially good and explain why they chose it.
- B. Tell students that they are going to create public service announcements (PSAs) to convince others of the importance of civic participation. Discuss the difference between a PSA and a commercial and ensure that students understand that they will be trying to “sell” an idea that should benefit the public good.
- C. Inform students of their choices of media (poster, television spot, radio spot, web-based PSA), according to what you wish them to use. Explain that the PSA should:
- Incorporate at least one of the quotes.
  - In their own words, graphics, or artistic way, convince others that active, effective citizenship is important.
  - Be appropriate and geared for an identified audience.

## **III. Ideas for Assessment**

- A. Have students write three paragraphs describing:
1. Why participation of citizens is especially important in a democracy.
  2. What quote(s) they selected and why.
  3. What they learned from this activity.’
- B. Assess students’ PSA product using the following criteria:
1. Does the PSA effectively incorporate quote(s).
  2. Does the PSA provide a rationale for civic participation?
  3. Is the PSA appropriate for the identified audience?
  4. Did students work effectively to create the product? (Did they spend adequate time on task, work cooperatively with other students, offer ideas/suggestions, participate in discussion and product design/completion?)

## **IV. Additional Ideas for Using Quotes**

- A. Quote of the Day: Have students find out if they could incorporate a quote into daily announcements, the school newspaper, school display case, bulletin board or marquee.
- B. Writing or Speaking Prompt: Use a quote as a writing prompt:

**U.S. or World History**

Select one of the quotes that represent a specific time and place. Have students describe the context for the quote at that time and place, then discuss and write about the relevance of the quote today.

**Government**

Select a quote related to one of the founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Federalist Papers, Bill of Rights). Have students discuss and write about the relevance of the document today.

Select a quote that, for its time, influenced the “public agenda.” Have students write about the quote in terms of how it was used to influence the public agenda at that time. Have students locate a recent quote from a national, state, or local figure and describe how they think the quote could influence the public agenda today.

**English/Language Arts**

Have students incorporate one of the quotes *effectively* into a piece of writing. Discuss how writers and speakers use quotes to persuade, provide point of view, etc.

Divide students into groups of three and assign each triad a different quote. Give students five minutes to work together to outline a “1-Minute Speech” that one student will give to the class. The theme of the speech could be:

- Why this quote is important to remember today.
- What this quote means to youth today.
- Incorporate the quote into a topic of your choosing.

**General**

Select several quotes that relate to the role and responsibility of citizenship. Have each student choose the quote that most resonates with him/her and discuss and write about his/her reasoning.

## **Educating for Democracy California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools**

### **Ten Civic Participation Quotes**

1. No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline.  
—Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General
2. Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.  
—Franklin D. Roosevelt, U.S. president
3. When I was young I used to volunteer in a soup kitchen and they thought I was wonderful. When I asked why there were soup kitchens, they thought I was a radical.”  
—Senator Paul Wellstone
4. You must be the change you wish to see in the world.  
—Mahatma Gandhi, Indian leader
5. If you think you’re too small to have an impact, try going to sleep in a room with a mosquito.  
—Anita Roddick, businesswoman
6. Bad politicians are sent to Washington by good people who don't vote.  
—William E. Simon, secretary of the treasury
7. The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.  
—Alice Walker, writer
8. It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error.  
—Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson
9. If you don’t like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time.  
—Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children’s Defense Fund
10. Our problems are man-made, therefore they may be solved by man. . . . No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings.  
John F. Kennedy, U.S. president

## Additional Civic Participation Quotes

Instead of being satisfied to alleviate suffering, we shall labor hard and continually to prevent it.  
—Helen Keller, blind and deaf educator

I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.  
—Chinese proverb

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.  
—William Butler Yeats, Irish poet

The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men.”  
—Lyndon B. Johnson, U.S. president

If you really believe in something, go for it! Life is too short to stand around and watch.  
—Ryan Tedschei, activist

Whatever you can do, or dream you can...begin it.  
—Goethe, German writer

When you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there.  
—Lewis Carroll, English writer and mathematician

Think globally, act locally.  
—Popular saying

This country will not be a permanently good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a reasonably good place for all of us to live in.  
—Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. president

¡Sí se puede! Yes, it can be done!”  
—Cesar Chavez, social activist

The time is always ripe to do what is right.  
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Imagination governs the world.  
—Napoleon

The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives.  
—Sioux proverb

It is not enough to be busy; so are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?  
—Henry David Thoreau, writer

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To make a difference is not a matter of accident, a matter of casual occurrence of the tides. People choose to make a difference.

—Maya Angelou, writer

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

—Eleanor Roosevelt, writer and humanitarian

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, clergyman and philosopher

If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.

—Booker T. Washington, educator and activist

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be.

—Thomas Jefferson

We cannot escape history.

—Abraham Lincoln

Democracy is not something you believe in or a place to hang your hat, but it's something you do. You participate. If you stop doing it, democracy crumbles.

—Abbie Hoffman, social activist

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

—Abraham Lincoln

There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.

—Elie Wiesel, author, Holocaust survivor

If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.

—From the *Federalist Papers*

The job of a citizen is to keep his mouth open.

—Gunter Grass, German writer

Whenever you have truth it must be given with love, or the message and the messenger will be rejected.

—Mahatma Gandhi, Indian leader

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead, anthropologist

The ballot is stronger than bullets.

—Joseph A. Schumpeter, economist

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I believe in Democracy because it releases the energies of every human being.  
—Woodrow Wilson

A nation as a society forms a moral person, and every member of it is personally responsible for his society.  
—Thomas Jefferson

Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who does nothing because he could do only a little.  
—Edmund Burke, British writer and leader

A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to Farce or Tragedy or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives.  
—James Madison, U.S. president